

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

must ensure their comrades are not sent off to carry out a failing plan designed by their civilian leadership.

I ask each of my colleagues: Are you willing to look a young soldier in the eye and tell them you are sending them off to Iraq based upon a failed policy and a recycled plan and based upon the hope that Prime Minister Maliki will get it right? How many more American lives will we lose before we realize this plan will not work? And if it were your son or daughter, how long would you be willing to wait? How long would you be willing to listen to the counsel of patience, of delay, of only one more chance, of stay the course?

I know I certainly am not willing to wait any longer.

I believe there is a difference between deference to the Commander in Chief and blind loyalty. I cannot support blind loyalty that sends more of America's sons and daughters to die for a war of choice, to die for a continuing failed policy. In my mind, that is irresponsible and I believe the very essence of the constitutional framework this country was founded on requires us to act. That is what the majority leader wants to do. It is time for some real profiles in courage. I urge my colleagues to allow us to have an up-or-down vote on the President's escalation, and to support the Warner-Levin resolution. I hope, beyond that, at a later time, to support future binding actions to stop the failed policy in Iraq.

I started today by reminding all of us of the words of John F. Kennedy and the profiles in courage he detailed in this Senate. He said:

In whatever arena of life one may meet the challenge of courage, whatever may be the sacrifices he faces if he follows his conscience—the loss of his friends, his fortune, his contentment, even the esteem of his fellow man—each man [and I add each woman] must decide for himself the course he will follow. The stories of past courage can define that ingredient—they can teach, they can offer hope, they can provide inspiration. But they cannot supply courage itself. For this, each man must look into his own soul.

I ask each Member of the Senate to look into your own soul and your own conscience, allow us to move to the Warner-Levin resolution, allow us to have a vote against the escalation of troops in Iraq. The Nation is waiting and they are watching, and there is accountability to be had.

With that, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SANDERS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

#### NOMINATION OF GENERAL GEORGE W. CASEY, JR., TO BE CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES ARMY

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of General George W. Casey, Jr., to be Chief of Staff, United States Army.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I support GEN George Casey's confirmation to be the next Chief of Staff of the United States Army. His nomination was approved by the Armed Services Committee by a vote of 19 to 6.

Through a long and distinguished career, he has held positions of increasing responsibility, culminating in that of Commanding General of multinational forces in Iraq, in which capacity he served for over 2½ years.

Prior to that command, he was Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, which was preceded by an assignment as Director of the Joint Staff, and before that as Director of Strategy, Plans, and Policy, J-5, on the Joint Staff.

General Casey is an infantryman, having commanded at all levels up to and including division command. As an assistant division commander, he served in Bosnia, and earlier in his career he served in Cairo as a U.N. military observer with the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization. He also served a tour of duty as a congressional liaison officer.

General Casey knows Iraq and the challenges the Army faces there. He also knows the Pentagon and the challenges he will face there. General Casey has the knowledge to perform his primary responsibilities as Chief of Staff, which is the training and equipping of soldiers and caring for them and their families.

There is some opposition to General Casey's nomination because he is identified with the administration's failed Iraq strategy, and I agree that strategy has not been successful. As a matter of fact, I have argued as forcefully as I know how that strategy has not been successful and that we need to change course in Iraq.

It is appropriate to hold military leaders responsible for their own failures, but the principal failures that have led to the chaos in Iraq were decisions of the civilian leaders. General Casey had to deal with the consequences of a myriad of flawed policies, including having insufficient forces at the outset of the operation, failing to properly plan for postwar stability operations, disbanding the Iraqi Army, then trying to build a new army, initially using civilian contractors, and an overly extensive

debaathification program, to name but a few.

All of these critical mistakes, which fueled the insurgency and civil disorder, are attributed to the civilian leadership in the White House, in the Department of Defense, and in the Coalition Provisional Authority. Compounding those mistakes was the effect of detainee abuse at Abu Ghraib attributed, in part, to ambiguities in what was considered permissible in the interrogation of prisoners fostered by that very same civilian leadership in the administration, the White House, and the Pentagon, where the advice of uniformed military lawyers was overruled. Those critical mistakes were made in the year before General Casey took command and had severe adverse consequences which he inherited.

General Casey's focus in Iraq was on training and equipping Iraqi security forces to bring them as quickly as possible to a level where they could relieve American forces from the burden of providing the security that Iraqis should be providing for themselves. He was not alone in seeing this was a priority. It was also the focus of his boss, the Central Command commander, General Abizaid, and his subordinates, the Corps commander, Lieutenant General Chiarelli, and the commanders of that training effort, Generals Petraeus and later Dempsey. General Casey put it this way:

The longer we in the United States forces continue to bear the main burden of Iraq's security, it lengthens the time that the Government of Iraq has to take the hard decisions about reconciliation and dealing with the militias. And the other thing is that they can continue to blame us for all of Iraq's problems, which are at base their problems.

Those are wise words. General Casey recognized there is no military solution to the situation in Iraq, that only a political solution enabled by Iraqi politicians making the essential political compromises can save the Iraqis from themselves. General Casey is not alone. There actually seems to be an agreement among most observers that an Iraqi political settlement is a key to ending the violence in Iraq. The difference of opinion exists on whether Iraqi politicians need breathing space, as President Bush has said, to reach required political compromises or whether, as many of us believe, Iraqi politicians need to be pressured to make those compromises and that the addition of 21,000 more troops doesn't make a political compromise more likely, it just gets us in deeper into a civil conflict.

It has been said that General Casey was too optimistic about the possibility of troops being reduced, having predicted in the spring and summer of 2006 and then subsequently predicting that reduction toward the end of 2006 and into 2007 was possible. He did make those predictions, and I think he was clearly overly optimistic. He has made a number of mistakes, but the key fundamental flaws were the mistakes